

NCThinks Success Story

Booker's Suggestion Improves Customer Service for Elderly

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Zebria Booker cares about people. Her concern led her to make a suggestion for NCThinks, the state's suggestion system for state employees. It was such a good suggestion that in February 2012, the NCThinks State Review Committee awarded Booker two days leave.

Booker, a supervisor at the EBT (Electronic Benefits Transfer) Call Center in Martin County, noticed that the center employees were taking many calls from the friends or relatives of card owners who wanted information about their loved one's benefits. "Unfortunately, we cannot give out that information if the relative is not listed as an authorized representative," said Booker.

Call center employees encourage card owners to contact their caseworker to have an authorized representative added to their account. The form needed in this case is called a DSS-1688, "Designation of Authorized Representative". "However, a lot of card owners are reluctant to contact their caseworkers because they don't have much success," said Booker. She also said that caseworkers are very busy – their caseloads have increased significantly in recent years.

Booker came up with a simple idea to help card owners. "I thought it would be just as easy for us to send them the DSS-1688 form to the card owner, and then all they would have to do is just take the completed form to caseworker to have their authorized representative set up in the system."

The idea was implemented in late 2010 and the success was readily apparent. By sending the DSS-1688 form themselves, call center employees enabled card owners to cut down the amount of time they needed to fill out unwanted, but necessary paperwork.

Booker learned about NCThinks from the state government website, www.ncgov.com. She said that her manager, Robert Butler, helped her to determine the costs of supplies. "Gwen Sanders and Terry Johnston (DHHS

agency coordinator for NCThinks) really helped to keep the process moving and to get it finalized,” she said. She advises future suggestors to know the name of their agency coordinator and keep track of their suggestion’s progress through the NCThinks system.

This summer, Booker will use her two days leave to extend her summer vacation.

She encourages state employees to submit suggestions to NCThinks. “I think there are a lot great customer service and money saving ideas from state employees,” she said.

State employees can submit suggestions online to NCThinks at www.ncthinks.nc.gov. Please note that there are eligibility requirements and that not every suggestion is eligible for an award.



February 8, 2012, L to r: Terry Johnston, Department of Health and Human Services; Linda Coleman, State Personnel Director, Zebria Booker, EBT Call Center, Department of Health and Human Services, Cotton Rawls, chair, NCThinks State Review Committee.

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